



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shana Jones, Special Assistant
Daryl Fields, Public Information Officer
(210) 384-7440

April 18, 2007

**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICIAL
CONVICTED OF BRIBERY AND EXTORTION CHARGES**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that in El Paso, 43-year-old Santiago Efrain Valle, an Immigration Enforcement agent with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, faces up to 18 years in federal prison after a jury convicted him yesterday afternoon of bribery and extortion under color of law.

Testimony during the two-day trial revealed that Valle agreed to accept \$20,000 in exchange for dismissing pending criminal charges against and changing the detainee risk classification of Francisco Gutierrez-Avila, a detainee at the El Paso Service Processing Center. On March 16, 2007, federal agents arrested after he accepted \$20,000 from undercover officers. Valle was wearing his duty uniform at the time of his arrest.

United States District Judge David Briones has scheduled sentencing for July 9, 2007.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney Greg McDonald is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

#####